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HUMANITAS

A literary journal of the
Medical University of South Carolina



Window Over Medina

Alex Kranc, College of Medicine

Mi Hermana a Sus Veintiún Años de Edad, Oil on canvas
Christian Hicks, College of Medicine



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Humanitas functions as a means for expression and reflection for the MUSC community. We seek to share, inspire, and delight you with the heartfelt works from the person you study next to, say hello in passing, and consult when in need.

This year, we received many wonderful submissions, all of which were reviewed by the Humanitas board. We have tried to select a representation of all the thought provoking and original submissions from this year, since we could not publish them all. Thank you for your generous submissions- our journal could not be possible without them.

Each year, we try to recognize three outstanding submissions in each medium. Congratulations to the following:

Prose	They didn't know.	Diann M. Krywko
Photography	Dahlia	Hope Friar
Visual Art	Cathartic Moment	Shalika Whig

Our journal depends on the assistance from our Humanitas Committee, particularly Dr. Steven Kubalak and Dr. Edward Krug, as well as the support from the MUSC Presidential and Provost office.

“The annual publication of Humanitas is a time-honored tradition at the Medical University of South Carolina. With each new edition, we are reminded that the students, faculty and staff on our campus are not only talented in health care studies, research and clinical care – they are also gifted writers, artists, and photographers. As we celebrate the creativity of these individuals, we hope to nurture a broader environment at the University in which science and art are both valued and seen as mutually reinforcing. May you find inspiration in the works that follow, and may our work together be ennobled by the spirit and passion of the artists among us.”

Dr. Raymond S. Greenberg, President

“Humanitas reminds us that much of the essence of MUSC life is interwoven with the arts and humanities. It is a jewel through which students, faculty, and staff present creative expression to enrich our community. I extend deep admiration and appreciation for their contributions.”

Dr. Mark S. Sothmann, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Thank you for taking the time to enjoy the work of your colleagues.



Olivia MaDan
Editor-in-Chief
2012-2013

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Vaqueros

Allan Sharpe, College of Medicine



Flaming Ride Oil on canvas

Latha Hebbar, Department of Anesthesia and Perioperative Medicine



For Dana

Aimee Strohecker, Department of Nursing Informatics

This couldn't be happening.

Not to us.

Not to my family.

This happens to people on morning talk shows. Or a fluff piece on the local news. Or women's magazines.

It hit me like the oft-quoted ton of bricks.

The verbiage a bit trite, I know but an accurate description nonetheless.

I have rolled my eyes every October when the whole world turned pink.

I'd grumble to myself that if I saw one more pink ribbon I was going to scream.

But there it was. Those two words.

Breast cancer.

Over the last several years, it's made us all no longer embarrassed to say the word "breast."

Fewer allusions to tits or boobs or jugs. Now we were allowed to say the proper term.

All that aside, it still couldn't be happening o us.

Not to her. Not to my sister.

Not to my best friend since the day I was born.

Not that girl.

And especially not at the age of 38.

With a husband and three small children and a household to run.

Not to this person who had never met a stranger.

Who went to church every Sunday with her brood in tow.

The one who believed so strongly.

But it was us. It was her.

And I'm as lost and afraid as I could ever imagine.

From a little lump on a Wednesday to a double-mastectomy the following Wednesday.

The week, the surgery, and looking after my nieces and nephew afterwards was a blur.

could barely see what was in front of me behind the constant flow of tears.

Next there was chemo.

She had to lose her breasts at 38, and now she would lose her health, her hair and frequently her food.

Hasn't she been through enough?

When would this horrific train wreck finally come to a halt?

But my greatest fear, the one that was too taboo to even talk about in our family and friend's flood of positivity.

What if I lose her?

My only sibling, my only sister. This person whose influence helped shape who I am.

The person whose mere presence made the world a better place.

What if I lose her?



Dahlia

Hope Friar, Office of Chief Information Officer



Honduran Girl Selling Doll
R. Allan Sharpe, College of Medicine

It was in the library where I first saw your face.
We met on the beach or was it out on the town?
Which ever it was bring on your “case,”
What matters the most is that I know you well now.

Indeed, we learned about each other very quickly.
Spending enough time together that would make most people sickly.
But I certainly didn’t mind the ample quality time
Especially when I can get you things just like mine.

On our first date we looked out over the harbor.
I was on my best behavior opening every car door.
We haven’t been back there since that very day,
So here is an invitation to ask you out again if I may.

We have been to many events, the number I can’t recall
But I know for sure that at each we had a ball.
Another fun event is coming up quite soon
Here’s a hint; you wouldn’t go to one of these in June.

We both know how to celebrate our scarce free time.
Particularly after we have been studying, bottom line.
So here is a little something that you need without a doubt,
When you want to have a drink but not run out.

My dad has always told me you’ll never understand the female gender,
But after dating and studying you I must say I am a contender
I understand that getting to know you is only one part;
The other half is finding the key to your heart.

Mt. San Jacinto

Raena Hariharan, College of Medicine

A chromatic desert transformed into mountain snow,
as we climbed up towards the sky.
The tram swung out and our insides rolled.
The air was iced and biting dry.

Snow clung to the conifer bough
and frost crunched beneath our feet.
The forest was quiet with scarcely a sound,
at the San Jacinto peak.

Sun glared atop the snowy boulders,
while we walked along the mountain crest.
Our hot breath swirled out as the air became colder
A goldenrod desert lay far below as the sun took rest.

The yellow pines were wrapped in darkness
and chill stubbornly stuck to my bones.
We toed near the fire pit and ashes,
relying on the technology of flint stones.

Numbness overcame, and we entered the tram.
Steel trusses kept us high over the deep ravine.
Many feet away from more common land,
we descended the mountain and took in the scene.

Resilience, Photograph and haiku

Amy Painter, College of Nursing

Some see a mountain
And detour around, missing
a victorious summit



Runner Learns Peace (for the addicted athletes and athletic addicts among us)

Leah Fryml, College of Medicine

'You must learn to bend your trials to your soul,
not your soul to your trials.'

Step, stride, churn, chide.

Breathe in--out slow, again,
until Heart steadies.

You adjust your pulse to your breath,
not breath to pulse.

This is Stability.

Choose any word; become it.

The mind creates what you need
of life-giving Space.

You drive a bridge under your body,
not body over bridge

This is Tranquility.

Power hard into the steep,
When every fiber screams for
the promised Climax.

Strength from struggle has freed you to touch
one who has earned your trust.

This is Physicality.

Strong back, firm core, agile hips.
Sustainable motion is powered by
a practiced Center.

Learn to mold your habits to your purpose,
not purpose to habits.

This is Flexibility.

'This is Peace.'

Bright, Watercolor

Steven A. Rosenzweig, Department of Cell and Molecular Pharmacology



Radiologist

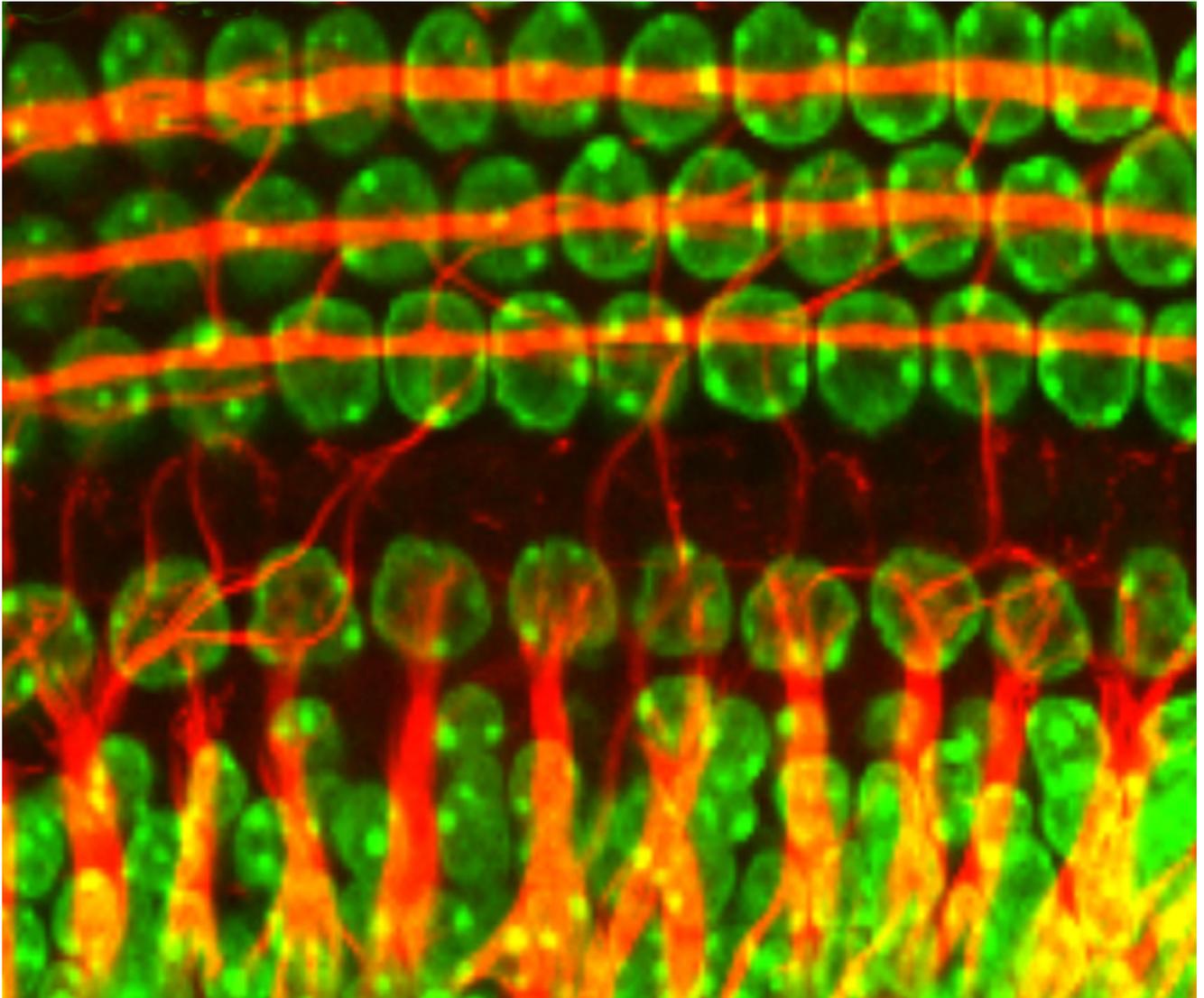
Arielle VanSyckel, College of Medicine

This is minimally invasive – as they say -
And I say it too with a trustworthy expression,
and intervene with a slit and some tubing.

It's not true though, and I know we are lying.
I see everything.

Neuronal fibers connecting inner ear sensory hair cells

Chandrakala Puligilla, Department of Pathology



Post-test Sunrise

Sudeep Das, College of Medicine



He didn't last long
after Stella died.
Weeks is all it took
after her eyes closed
for his light to grow darker
for the senses to wane.
He didn't fight it
didn't struggle
or lose his dignity.
He didn't barter
or wish for a bigger helping.

As a younger man he met her,
in those rooms,
next to the smell of paper and ink.
Calmly, comfortably reading those Latin words,
with her head bent down
dark tendrils of hair dancing,
tickling the pulpy paper
that described what would ultimately take her home.

At first, he inhaled her
felt her arc through his chest
felt her fill his lungs.
Slowly he sipped her kindness
he tipped her honesty
and nipped her vitality.
Eventually he indulged,
swallowed her delicate intricacy,
gulped her down.

She was smooth and warm, thick
and she coated the inside of his throat
and trickled down into his center.
She flowed through his veins
and crept into his everything
and never abused.
She enveloped his conscious
seeped down into the darkest crevices of his mind.
She draped herself around his organs
and permeated deep
into the adytum of his heart.

Oh, Stella.
She knew the little things.
That two scoops of sugar really meant three.
That the rising nails in the warped wood
were as beautiful as the glossy placid inlet
at the end of their dock by the marsh.
That the Allemande was as moving as the Prelude.
That he hadn't really
forgotten the color of her eyes.
That he'd never felt worse
than that time he didn't laugh at her story
and he'd left her there
flailing in that awkward quiet.
Only later, he could think of nothing funnier
than that pudding smeared through her niece's hair.

Oh Stella,
was it really so surprising,
that he didn't last long
after you closed your eyes.



Macaw

R. Allan Sharpe, College of Medicine



After others ripped me open

Aimee Strohecker, Departmental of Nursing Informatics

After others ripped me open
Or even tried to coax me open,
you came.
You came, by yourself
And you mattered.
And for the first time
There was no ripping or
pulling, or even coaxing.
Just your beautiful face
and kind heart.
You told me I didn't have to
tell you anything I didn't want to.
And you finally opened me.
Sometimes without even knowing it.
All that spilled out,
like a dam bursting.
But even when I pulled away
from you in fear,
You never let go.
Please don't give up on me.
Keep hold of my hand.
I am no one but yours.

Acid Rain Tree
Bill Basco, Department of Pediatrics



They didn't know.

Diann M. Krywko, Department of Emergency Medicine

They didn't know.

They didn't know that they would lose their 33 year old mother that day.

They didn't know that they would lose their 33 year old daughter that day.

They didn't know the terms sepsis, shock, intubation, and hypoxia.

They didn't know that the right place to die wasn't in the emergency department.

They didn't know the noise and chaos weren't taking away from her care.

They didn't know the politics in getting a bed for a vented withdrawal of care patient.

They didn't know that I struggled with my emotions and cried outside of the curtain.

They didn't know.

But I did.

**Still Life in Brown and Green,
Oil on canvas**

Christian Hicks,
College of Medicine



Thoughts of a first year medical student after seeing a man die in the hospital

Danny Weinberg, College of Medicine

How can you or I
age 22 or 25
know what it is to lie
without the fire inside?
To say goodbye?

It seems so easy
to use a scalpel, greasy,
through skin that sheds no blood.
he lungs don't inflate
even if you wait.

Without the mess
how do you address
the unpleasant sight of death?
There's no formal introduction,
just instruction.

But think if you can
on the sight of a man
with shirt on his back and hair on his head.
Is he really not moving?
Or, are you just assuming?

He's dead.

Brother? Son? Father?
Now you feel you must bother
to find out who he is.
What would you say
to his family on the way?

There is nothing stranger
than realizing the danger
in every second you breathe.
Things are no longer just fine
after you see death the first time.



Guiding Light, Watercolor
Emily Garriott, Pharmacy Doctorate

Longing for the ice, Acrylic on canvas
Joseph Romagnuolo, Department of Medicine



The Plot of the Little Brother

Jordan Garris, College of Medicine

Somewhere in a dusty stack of VHS tapes is a clip of me at three years old, leaning over my brother's baby carrier and giddily vowing I would never, ever be mean to him. I think of this often, and then immediately remember socking him in the face in our church gym some years later. Don't worry, the basketball court floor had a cushy surface for him to fall on, and besides, I'm sure he deserved it.

For much of my childhood and adolescence, I believed my brother had two goals in life: 1) to get me in trouble with Mom and Dad and 2) to make me late for school. At the time, I feared parental and teacher disappointment more than anything else. Now I at least have the sense to bump those horrors down on the list, not as bad as losing a loved one, but still worse than getting hit by a car and landing in the trauma bay where my classmates strip my clothes. My brother seemed to know exactly how to exploit both of my childhood fears. I'm sure his efforts were intentional.

One morning he achieved the double whammy. He was late getting ready for school as usual, and then in his unfailing incompetence, he couldn't get the minivan door closed. In a heroic effort for punctuality, I leaped across the aisle and yanked the door closed, smashing the key lime pie he had baked for his class with my bottom. I didn't see what the big deal was; he didn't even like key lime pie, and I doubted his ten year old efforts would be worth tasting. But I endured a lecture from my mother that still makes me nauseous to remember.

He had other faults too, like chasing my friends and me around with Star Wars guns that shot felt discs and receiving the CD I had *clearly* asked for myself for Christmas.

But he also had some good little brother qualities. He went along with my plan to layer my neon bathing suits over our pajamas and don star-shaped sunglasses for a photo shoot. Day after day, he submitted to the role of pupil for hours of playing school. I still credit myself this is the reason he began kindergarten already able to read.

I did my best to avoid him and his plots to get me in trouble throughout high school. Then I met my first boyfriend, now my husband, and the unspoken rule that you're supposed to be civilized, even friendly, with your younger siblings kicked in. All was going swimmingly, and the three of us even took a trip to Florida, where my aunt almost ruined it all by asking, "Oh, so you don't hate Joey anymore?" Luckily, my boyfriend Nathan also had a little brother, who's ambition had been to never let Nathan have a minute of privacy. So Nathan understood. And Joey did his part. He has not once made me late or gotten me in trouble since.

Triple Falls, Dupont State Forest, NC
Bill Basco, Department of Pediatrics



In one sense, I was completely alone and in the wilderness. In another, I was in more company than I have ever been.

The Appalachian Trail runs over 2000 miles, from northern Georgia to northern Maine. A narrow strip, a few feet wide, that goes through 14 states on the east coast. At times, I was walking 50 miles from a paved road. Others, I passed over some of the busiest interstates in the nation.

Mostly, while walking, I felt alone. I didn't feel that I was unexplored territory, because it's hard to pretend that you're in the wilderness when you're following bright white stripes of paint on trees hundred yards or so. Still, though, isolation was a constant. I might walk for 20 miles without realizing that I hadn't seen a single person. On a rainy week, only the most persistent hikers trek through the muddy path.

But in another sense, the Appalachian Trail is one of the most populated places in the world. It's a linear space, with no area, which is constantly occupied by thousands of hikers, thousands of people united by some singular goal. I may be alone for most of the day, but I know very well the next ten people ahead of and behind me. I'll see them when I speed up and pass them, or when I slow down and they pass me. We become friends. We don't know each other's real names but rather pseudonyms dubbed "trail names," which become our identities on this narrow strip of land. We exist as a long, narrow village of friends.

News travels hundreds of miles in days by word of mouth. Someone mentions the hiker "B-52" and gets an immediate reply of "is that the guy who did 60 miles in a day?" Someone mentions "Machete Mike," and people are instantly reminded of the crazy guy that a group met in Georgia carrying nothing but a machete and a plastic garbage bag.

Trail stories become trail legends. The unknown off-the-books hostel in Massachusetts is described as a shady 24/7 party place, even though it's just a guy who lets people sleep on the couches in his house. Stories are heard and retold, and while their attribution usually remains to the original owner, they are told with little and less fidelity to the truth.

The time is told more often in miles than in days, because days seem to mean nothing. We all hike at our own speeds, but we all remember the shelters and their mileage behind us. Miles are the common currency for our existence.

Home on the trail consists of a trail shelter, usually a wooden platform with a roof with a nearby spring for a water source. At night, though, they are transformed into caravanserais. Weary travelers walking from the north meet with walkers from the south and discuss conditions of the trail ahead for each. Information is freely exchanged, and a group shares a common bond, becoming a family for the night. A home is made and broken in an evening. Sometimes the loneliness lasts until the next home is made.

Even beyond this, I am a compatriot of the thousands that have walked on this trail before. We share an identical path across the nation, a common purpose, a shared ideal. From a twelve-year-old hiking the 2,181 miles with his father, to a seventy-year-old retiree hiking the trail for her second time, we walk as a fraternity. We walk in the spirit of Benton Mackaye, who first imagined the completed trail, and Earl Shaffer, the first to hike it in its entirety. We become a family through a shared experience.

Feet become blistered, then calloused. Fat burns, muscles build, and minds wander. But when it comes down to it, when I'm asked what I did for those days in the woods, it's sometimes best to answer:

"Ambulavi. I walked."

What you are

Danny Weinberg, College of Medicine

Today is the best day to be alive.

Tomorrow is not guaranteed.

Yesterday cannot be touched,

Or smelled, or

Heard,

Tasted,

Or seen. Lived.

To *be* is better than to be
remembered.

Ensign

Hope Friar, Office of Chief Information Officer



Fly Against a Window Pane

Jens Jensen, Department of Radiology

Fly against a window pane
knows not how nor why he came
he flies against the window pane
flies for freedom but in vain
 fly, fly, fly against the window pain

Full of might the fly attacks
hidden force that holds him back
he tries to fly right through the pane
what he does is bash his brain
 fly, fly, fly against the window pain

By his fight the fly is bruised
body battered, mind confused
the sky's the place he tries to gain
but instead he goes insane
 fly, fly, fly against the window pain

Fly lies still beside the pane
though he died he's not to blame
he died against the window pane
tried for freedom but in vain
 bye-bye, fly against a window pane

Flight

Hope Friar, Office of Chief Information Officer



Cooper River Bridge

R. Allan Sharpe, College of Medicine



Seems like you've been there, when you're out on your own
Then you search the horizon, your future's still unknown
You might get lucky, maybe you're just smart
Choosing the right direction, that's a good start

In uncharted waters, carefully make your move
In uncharted waters, one mistake and you lose
Everything you have, everyone you love

If you had a crystal ball, then you would know
And you wouldn't worry, which way to go
I know you wonder, will it ever end
Because it's been hard for you, and also for your friends

In uncharted waters, carefully make your move
In uncharted waters, one mistake and you lose
Everything you have, everyone you love

You've been rewarded for your hard work and tears
Now you made it through another year

Look at the horizon, the future is still unknown
But you are not alone, you are not alone

Private Lesson

John Minner, College of Medicine

“That’s it,” she says. “Cut along the line in the manual.”

My scalpel is trembling. Everything about this feels wrong.

“It’s okay,” she says, smiling up at me. “Go ahead.”

I start pulling the scalpel down through her skin. She doesn’t react, even a little.

“Doesn’t this hurt?” I ask.

“Not so much,” she replies. “Nothing hurts so much when you’re dead.”

I nod and finish the incision.

“Neurons, I guess. Neurons don’t work, so I don’t feel pain. That smarts a bit, though.”

I look down at what my hands are doing; they’re sawing through the ribcage and cracking it open.

“Slide your hand underneath the heart. What space is that?”

I just stare at her blankly. We reviewed it yesterday. My anatomy book is open to that page on the stool next to me, but I can’t read the words. “I don’t know,” I finally answer her.

“Oblique pericardial sinus. Don’t worry, you’ll get it eventually.”

I can look in her face and see that she means it and that she believes in me, but I don’t believe it myself.

“Go ahead,” she says. “Cut through the great vessels.”

And I do. I take my scissors out of my dissection kit, and I snip through her aorta, her pulmonary trunk, her superior and inferior vena cava, and her pulmonary veins. I lift out her entire heart, now separated from the rest of her. Still caked in fat, with dried clumps of blood occupying all its chambers.

I look at the heart, and I look at her. Or, most of her. What remains of her that I haven’t mutilated. Her, minus the pound or so of heart that I’m holding.

“So, how’s med school?” she asks. She’s smiling still, even though she’s looking at me while I have her heart in my hands.

“It’s going well so far.” It’s an answer I give so often that it’s become rehearsed. I haven’t actually given any thought as to its truthfulness, but it’s the easiest way to deal with the question. I’m not sure I’m interested in thinking much more about it. I’d rather just pretend it’s the truth. Usually the next step in the conversation is that I ask the other person how they’re doing. It’s ordinarily asking about grad school or their career or whatever this particular person has going on in their life. This time, though...

“So, how’s death?” I stammer out. To be honest, I’m more interested in the answer to this question than the specifics of

a friend's post-college existence.

"It's relaxing," she replies. "Much more fun than dying."

I smile for the first time. "What's dying like?"

"Exhausting," she says. "Look around at everyone else at these tables. Two types. Some of them went quickly. Heart attacks, stuff like that. You can tell because they still have some meat on their bones."

"But you're so thin," I say in return.

"Because I'm the second type. I took my time, waiting on it. At a couple points, I was praying for it. But waiting like that takes a toll, and your body pays it for you. So I waste away and die when there's nothing left. At least you get to die at the end of it."

I don't know how to ask this, so I just do. "Is there anything after this?"

"You're looking at it, kid," she responds.

"So there's nothing?"

"If that's how you see it, I guess. Would you believe me if I said there were fluffy clouds and ornate entranceways? Something about going toward a healing light and meeting divine and overwhelming peace?"

I stopped. "No, I guess not."

"Best not fret about it then. You'll find out when your time comes. Now, you got my heart cleaned off good yet?"

"I think so. But I don't really know what I'm looking for."

She rolls her eyes. "Bring it here, kid." So I do, and her dissected arms raise up to hold it over her face. "Yeah, you've got the major ones clean. Anterior Interventricular, Posterior Interventricular, most of the veins. Not bad. You know these yet?"

I shake my head.

"Better study tonight, kid. Or, this morning, as it were."

I don't realize what she means until I hear the alarm.

"Not yet," I say, almost pleading. "I still need more help. I don't know so much of this."

"Get used to it, kid," she says, putting her heart back into her chest and reassembling her chest wall. "Come test day, you're still gonna feel like that. Just relax."

She smiles at me one last time. "Everything's going to be alright."

I wake up staring at my alarm clock. Lecture begins in an hour.

My Little Cocker, Charcoal Pencil

Tanisha Hutchinson, College of Medicine



The moon was huge and blood-red as I drove home from a dance workshop at the Wellness Center. Doing about 60 on the long deserted down-slope of the Stono River bridge onto Johns Island, I was thinking about Tango and its hypnotic allure when I glimpsed flashing blue lights far behind me. I touched the brakes, better to be safe than sorry; whoever was being pulled over was shocked right now, and there but for the grace of God went I. Astor Piazzolla's rhythmic paean to lost love was on the radio, and I turned it up. Next thing I knew, a police car was on my tail, his lights in my face, his siren whooping urgently. I pulled over, shocked, trying not to swerve too zealously, recalling the glass of wine I'd had earlier. I rolled down the windows and breathed deeply to dissipate any lingering aromas. The engine ticked, mosquitoes buzzed, and a barred owl called from the woods.

The cruiser's door swung open, and an officer loomed in my rear-view, a foot-long flashlight in her hand. She glanced at me and swiveled her torch across the back seat. I thought of the beautiful doe-eyed attendant on my flight into Beirut. "Good evening, Officer." She returned my smile, briefly. "Do you know you were doing 60 in a 45?" "Surely not. I'm sorry. I wanted to get home before midnight." She regarded me levelly. "My name's not Shirley. May I see your license and registration?" I felt around in the glove-box and said, "I'm returning from an Argentine Tango class at the University, every Tuesday, very beguiling. Have you ever thought about Tango, Ma'am?" She may have rolled her eyes, but the note of asperity in her voice was unmistakable. "Not that I remember. I'll be back in a minute."

I closed the windows and sat tight, listening to "Regreso al Amor" and reflecting on the injustice of a ticket for a little speed on an empty highway in the middle of nowhere. I must have dozed off momentarily, for her tap on the window startled me, pasting a guilty look onto my face. She gave me a pale blue warning slip, told me to slow down, and smiled, briefly. I thanked her and thought how a civil society is essentially just, how the truly blameless are rightly immune, and how as always luck was on my side.

On the last moonlit stretch of River Road, almost home, doing about 40, I suddenly registered a full-grown deer trotting across the road directly in front of me. I stood on the brakes. The impact was solid and irrevocable and hurled the animal into a ballistic trajectory that spanned the divide between life and death. I stopped. The blameless deer lay broken in the glare of the high beams, its head still reaching for the safety of the dark woods where the barred owl called. I flipped on the emergency lights, and as in a dream, I stepped out of the car and approached the vivid still-life splayed on the asphalt. Piazzolla's insistent cello and double bass fugue became a dirge as I dragged the creature by its warm velvet feet onto the grass verge. The celebration of life evoked by Tango seemed impotent and irrelevant in the face of sudden death. And yet the music's tendrils weaved their way into my stunned heart, freighting the moment with gravity and remorse, but also kindling a redemptive spark of solace...

Cathartic Moment, Watercolor
Shalika Whig, College of Medicine



It is damp and gray out.
The skies still sunk in shadow,
the streets slick with leaves and fallen rain.
Yellow sac spiders cling to their labyrinth
of fine gauzy webbing, crossing the corners
of grimy weathered windowsills.
Water droplets rest undisturbed
upon the ensnared prey.

Along the path, the white spots
in the pudding stones shine from wetness.
Tufts of sweet, green grass in patches
radiate a tinny, acerbic scent
and daffodils droop, burdened by rain water
collected on the brittle petals.
The crimson brick, dusted with maple pollen,
is cool and wet,

as my fingers dance
upon the building side of Briarcliff.
Through the threshold my boots,
caked with dirt, leave crumbling tracks.
Chattering sounds begin to rise
in the crowded hall.

I swing open my rusted locker door
with a clattering of metal,
yellowed paint chipping
along the edges of the frame.
I place my coat and bag on the hook
and gather my books.
My attention is drawn to the torn fragments
settled on the floor of the locker,
the smiles shredded and memory stinging.
The bell rang once again.

I enter the humming classroom
And see her sitting by the windows.
Peachy cheeks, my ex-friend,
gives a uncertain look my way.
It was still there.
Enduring.
A lingerin stain.
A bitterness between us.

Resolve

Adam Davie, College of Medicine

Before me is a fruit tree
Bearing earthly gifts,
Which hang from branches,
Scattered all around,
Bountiful near the base,
But growing stingy as they climb
Farther up the trunk, skyward bound,
Each one yielding a sweeter sap
Than its low-hanging neighbor
With more impediments
To the light of the sun.

Long have I stood here,
With only the profit of my reach,
Wishing I could taste a sweeter lot,
But daring not to try,
For despite my discontent,
A deathly fear of heights
Keeps me firmly on the ground.

Yet still I can't refrain from looking up,
And, embittered, do I ponder
Why I'm not at peace with what I have,
As many others are,
Who share the harvest that I reap,
But find it good enough
To keep unburdened
By "What else...?"

Only soon the day will come
When, had I started to climb,
Slowly, slowly, trembling limbs and all,
After first setting eyes beyond my grasp,
I could have now returned,
And cast off all the weight
Of doubt and wonder.
And truly will that day be hard to face,
Such that I should never want to do it,
For all the suffering of the journey I may save.

Manarola

Alex Kranc, College of Medicine





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